

**Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council**  
**Wednesday 27 April 2022, 7.00 pm**  
**Croxdale Community Centre**

**Parish Council Members Present:**

Councillor L Griffiths, (Chair), Councillor J Garner, Councillor P Adams, Councillor S Burton, Councillor P Kerrison, Councillor M Ord, Councillor A Watt and I Watt.

**Also Present:**

County Councillors J Blakey, G Hutchinson and M McKeon.

**136/21. Apologies for Absence:**

There were no apologies of absence.

**137/21. Declarations of Interest:**

There were no declarations of interest.

**138/21. Policing:**

The Clerk shared Policing crime stats: 6 incidents being recorded for the period February 2022 within the Parish.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**139/21. Public Participation**

No members of the public attended the meeting.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**140/21. Minutes:**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 30 March 2022 were to be revised to reflect allotment fencing at the Poultry Centre, which were then agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**141/21. Matters Arising:**

**i. Hett Litter Pick:**

April's litter pick will take place on 28 April 2022. Clerk also reported she had fed back on grass cutting at Hett to which no response has been received. Councillor I Watt confirmed the grass cutting on the village greens have been cut today (in one go – around the edges and the green itself) and are a lot tidier, however, the number of cuts is not frequent enough. Councillor Garner commented some daffodils at Croxdale were damaged as a result of grass cutting.

**Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to enquire the number of cuts of grass cutting.**

**ii. Hett Village Green:**

Revised plans have now been received from DCC; however, the landowner's solicitor has requested further detail on the plans for the land registry, therefore is now back with DCC. Clerk confirmed she had requested confirmation of final costings from Alliance which is still to be confirmed.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**iii. Allotments:**

Annual letters regarding next year's fees and charges have been issued along with a revised copy of the allotment regulations as agreed at the last meeting. Re-allocation of allotments is still ongoing.

The Clerk informed Members of a request received from a tenant at the Poultry Centre to move the boundary fence and re-configure their allotment plot. Members did not approve this request due to access and the proposed unused land is to be reconfigured into an allotment plot and re-let.

**Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to inform the tenant accordingly that the request has not been approved.**

**iv. Defibrillator - Croxdale Community Centre:**

County Councillor McKeon confirmed the funding application is currently ongoing.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**v. Croxdale Cemetery Works:**

Councillor Ord reported the tarmac to the entrance is around 40mm lower than the bottom of the gate bolt which means that the gate cannot be shut properly. This was reported to the contractor and they installed a pin floor cylinder on 21/04/2022.

**Resolved: For Members' Information**

**vi. Hett Pond:**

Councillor Griffiths reported initial discussions have taken place with the Cemetery Maintenance contractor, and will provide a cost in due course of the proposed works.

**Resolved: For Members' Information**

**vii. Sunderland Bridge Village Green Tree:**

A letter was issued to the resident concerned as requested.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**viii. Garden Rubbish at Croxdale:**

This was reported to Neighbourhood Wardens for enforcement action; however, no response has been forthcoming from the property despite attempts to make contact. As there is no evidence the rubbish has come from their garden, the rubbish will be removed from the Clean and Green Team.

**Resolved: For Members' Information**

**ix. Cherry Tree Planting:**

County Councillor McKeon confirmed Clean and Green were looking at locations for the planting of Cherry Trees, although planting season may be too late for this year.

**Resolved: For Members' Information**

**x. Highways Visit – 17 March 2022:**

The MPs office of Mary Foy has been in contact regarding the petition and supports in principle. A meeting is to be arranged with the campaign to continue.

**Resolved: For Members' Information**

**xi. Queen's Jubilee Arrangements:**

Councillor Adams confirmed Sunderland Bridge are not progressing with the AAP funding due to the required authorisation process which is lengthy and time consuming. County Councillor Blakey confirmed Croxdale Community Centre is looking to arrange some form of celebrations in Croxdale across the 4-day period.

**Resolved: For Members' Information**

**142/21 Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence:**

**i. Bench Ownership - Croxdale:**

Clerk informed Members of an enquiry received from a resident regarding ownership of benches at Windsor Court, Croxdale, due to their condition and need of repair. It was understood the benches are owned by Believe Housing but the maintenance is carried out by DCC via a service level agreement.

**Resolved: Clerk to contact Believe Housing in the first instance.**

**ii. Croxdale Cemetery:**

Councillor Ord reported the cemetery fence on the north side is leaning over and also appears some areas to be loose or broken. Councillor Ord also commented on the chapel of rest within the cemetery grounds which is deteriorating rapidly. Clerk reminded Members the ownership of the chapel was considered pre-covid (early 2020) with enquiries been made regarding claiming adverse possession.

**Resolved: Clerk to contact the fencing contractor who carried out fencing repairs previously. Clerk to contact Solicitor for costs associated with claiming adverse possession and land registry fees in the first instance.**

**143/21. Financial Matters:**

**(i) Financial Report for the Period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022:**

A financial update prepared by the Clerk was circulated to Members which included a detailed schedule of receipts and payments for the financial year to date and bank reconciliation to 31 March 2022. The current net bank balances totalled £32,673.98.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**(ii) Appointment of Internal Auditor for the year ending 31 March 2022:**

Clerk requested approval for Mr G Fletcher (who also carried out last year's audit) be appointed as the Council's Internal Auditor for the year 2021/22.

**Resolved: Mr G Fletcher be appointed as the Council's Internal Auditor for the year 2021/22.**

**(iii) 2021/22 Annual Return and Audit Requirements – Certificate of Exemption:**

As the Parish Council's annual turnover is less than £25,000, the Parish Council does not require a full external audit. However, the Parish can request a full audit if required, subject to a fee. The Parish is still required to carry out an internal audit, completion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and to publicise correct accounting information at the end of the process for Parishioners to view on our website.

**Resolved: For Members' Information. The Parish Council agreed for the exemption of a full external audit for 2021/22.**

**144/21. Parish Council Co-option:**

The Clerk reported no applications were received with regard to the vacancy of Parish Councillor for Sunderland Bridge Ward.

**Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to re-advertise vacancy accordingly.**

**145/21. Garage Rules and Regulations:**

The clerk prepared a draft policy on the management of garages for Members consideration. Legal advice is to be sought in the first instance to determine and clarify the Parish Council's responsibility or liability in the event of death of a tenant and when a tenant moves out of the area.

**Resolved: Clerk to obtain advice via CDALC in the first instance.**

**146/21. Planning Issues:**

The Clerk reported the Parish Council has received the following planning application(s) for comment / objection:

- a) DM/22/00598/FPA – West Street, Hett - single storey extension to rear
- b) DM/22/01001/FPA – North Street, Hett - pitched roof to rear, replacement fenestration and re-render property
- c) DM/22/01022/FPA – Croxdale Hall - new Build Development of 6 new Dwelling houses in the form of 2 Terraces of 3 Units including 3 No 3 Bed Units and 3 No 2 Bed Units
- d) DM/22/01101/AD – Sunderland Bridge - advertisement consent for the erection of lectern information boards for Northern Sains Trail.

Discussion took place regarding item c – regarding the proposed development at Foster Terrace, Croxdale. Members were concerned regarding road safety, access and the current use of land as allotment land.

**Resolved: Clerk to prepare letter of objection to planning application - DM/22/01022/FPA prior to the associated deadline (5 May 2022).**

**147/21. County Councillor Reports:**

County Councillor Blakey gave an update in relation to: Integra 61 is to start next phase end of June. Cabinet was held this morning which agreed to the sale of the HQ building at the Sands to Durham University.

County Councillor McKeon gave an update in relation to: levelling up bid for Durham City – development of Integra 61 land. Bid to improve connections around Durham City. AAP Town and Villages funding to look at speeding issues in Croxdale, Hett and Sunderland Bridge.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**148/21. AOB:**

**Front Street, Croxdale:**

Councillor Kerrison reported a Believe Housing tenant at Front Street, Croxdale, is causing concern regarding burning rubbish/furniture in the front garden, noise nuisance (dog barking) and untidiness in the village.

**Resolved: County Councillor Blakey agreed to contact the Housing Officer in the first instance.**

**149/21. Date and Time of Next Meeting:**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 25 May 2022 at 7.00 pm at Hett Village Hall.